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TOWN
&
COUNTRY
CHURCH

And When They Had Seen

Photo by A. Devaney, N. Y.

A Meditation for Christmas

O. P. KRETZMANN

• It was midnight in Bethlehem, and the angels had gone away into heaven. The great golden moment in the long journey of man from the shadows of Paradise Lost to the sunlight of Paradise Regained had come swiftly in the stillness of a Judean night. A Child had been born, and the dreams of patriarch and prophet were now cradled forever in a manger. All the centuries of promise and the years of fulfillment had met suddenly in that manger-cradle under singing skies. When God moves, He moves speedily. That night all the time of man lay before Him as a cup which had run over. In a flashing moment of song the fullness of time had come and the weary, silent centuries became only rehearsal. And everything that has followed, the rise and fall of nations, the story of man's defeats and God's victories, the glory of redemption and the building of the city of God on earth has been only the postlude of the angels' song. "Unto you is born this

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• On Page 7 we present Dr. Benson Y. Landis's twelfth and final article on "Recollections." In this article he tells about some of his friends.

• For Joseph T. Todd's account of a "Work Week" project in a Missouri church, turn to Page 9. Mr. Todd is minister of the Edina Christian Church, Mo.

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No. 138
December, 1958

Congregational Church
Newbury, Vermont

Photo by A. Devaney, N. Y.

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day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

That is God's way. The heavenly pageant passed and faded from the midnight sky, the stars appeared in their courses, and the Child was asleep in the manger. Perhaps all the events of that holy night, from the arrival of Mary and Joseph at the inn to the return of the shepherds, occupied less time than the hours we set aside for decorating our homes for another Christmas. The crowded inn, a mother and Child, a wondering man, a few simple shepherds, a sudden song—and it was all over. The world's clock marked the beginning of a new day which was to end only in God's own good time. The patient waiting of the people of God was transformed in a heavenly moment into the hurrying feet of the shepherds running to see the things that had come to pass. Christmas had come, and it had come quickly.

All that was very long ago. Since the night when the word "Peace" rang from heaven to earth, war has followed war, men have added sin to sin, and ages of pain lie between us and the holy hills of our first Christmas. Once a year, as the last page appears on the calendar, men come again, over all the strange pathways on which they have lost themselves, to kneel at a shrine of straw. Hard and unhopeful they may be, but they seem to see dimly, through the tears of loneliness and the shame of forgetfulness, a wisdom that must bend the knee and a love that must win the heart. And if, by the pity of God, they know that the manger of the Child of Bethlehem is large enough to hold all their sin and all their shame, the eyes of their faith see the true glory of Christmas. The hand of the Child reaching for His mother's hand is strong enough to reach into all the dark corners of life and time and tear our sin and pride and hate. They are wise men who kneel at the manger in that faith, wise with the wisdom of the adoring shepherds and the singing angels. In the starlight of Christmas no hope is so high as to be forever beyond their reach, no dream is too holy to be fulfilled, no sin is too great to be forgiven. Christmas comes again, and through the gray shadows of life and the dark forces which break the hearts of men they see once more the eternal Light and hear the story of the love which has made all things new by mending all the old fears, the old doubts, and the old sins which had been their lot since Paradise Lost. Christmas means that God came down to earth. Now earth can never be quite the same again.

That is God's Christmas. And see what man has made of it! There may be a moment of insight on Christmas Eve when man, even in the year of our Lord 1958, feels that in the story of the manger lies the answer to his profoundest need and his highest hope. The happiness in the air, the spirit of good will among men, the merry greetings, the Christmas gifts—all these may give him a vivid, though momentary sense of Christmas. He may feel that in the Holy Child lies healing for all the broken lives and the warring wills of men. Unless, however, that feeling is born of and sustained by a living, continuing faith in the divine and eternal purpose of Christmas, it can have little meaning for the torn heart of man. It will mean only that he has glimpsed a glory which he will not share and seen a path winding its way down from God and up to God which he will not walk. Here is the tragedy of Christmas. The carols fade on the midnight air, the candles in sanctuary and home flicker and die, and man returns to a world without Christmas. The name

of the Child is on his lips for one fleeting day, but the spirit of Mammon is in his heart all the days of his life. In a hard world in which Christmas has become only a memory no question is more important than this: Can Christmas be permanent? Can its heavenly strains still sing above the voices of those who say that men must live and move by hate and force and greed? Can Christmas remain after Christmas Day?

Nineteen hundred years ago the shepherds faced the same question. They had seen the glory of the Lord. They had heard the songs of the choirs of eternity. They had celebrated the world's first Christmas. What would happen now? All their tomorrows lay before them, to be moved, one by one, into the light of a single radiant midnight. We do not know, of course, what the years did to them or what they did with the years, but their beginning on that first Christmas morning was glorious: "And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child." For them Christmas was no secret. The Savior of the uttermost ends of the earth lay in a manger at Bethlehem, and the ends of the earth had need to hear about it. There was no time to lose. They had seen only a baby, but in their eyes were the banners of the King and their lips had become the trumpets of God. There was a greater task and a higher duty now than the keeping of sheep on the hills beyond Bethlehem. They made it known abroad, in the inn too crowded for God's Christmas, on the streets stirring with the life of another day, to the pilgrims who had come from afar to register in the city of David. They became the first missionaries of Christmas, the messengers of a fair and final hope, martyrs who lived through pain and persecution and died by rope and fire and sword, always and forever with Christmas in their hearts.

Surely the most haunting need of our forgetful age is the need of a few shepherds who will return from the worship of the Holy Child on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day to make known abroad the saying which they have heard. There are thousands within the reach of our hands and the sound of our voices to whom Christmas is only the symbol of a lost faith. Viewed in the light of eternity, are the crowded churches of Christendom on Christmas Day not a tragedy? Here is a man who has come to catch a brief glimpse of the faith of his childhood; here is a woman whose eyes have been blinded by the glare of living; here is a man who sees for a moment the vast, almost incredible, wonder of the manger. These are our burden and our opportunity in the days after Christmas. To give them the hope and glory of Christmas, to light again the candle of an old and forgotten faith on altars broken by sin, to make known abroad the saying concerning the Child in whom alone there is love and peace and vision and peace—this is our task in the days that follow Christmas.

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God laid the Child in the manger. Is it not true that too often men have left Him there? Undoubtedly there were many in crowded Bethlehem on that first Christmas night who heard of the Child in the manger and the strange events that attended His birth. But only the shepherds lifted the Baby from the bed of straw and carried Him out into the world in their hearts. Christmas was only a prelude for them. In the great drama of redemption it was the end of the centuries of waiting, but in the lives of the believing shepherds it was the beginning of a new and heavenly

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Photo by A. Devaney, N. Y.

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task. The Holy Child was now to be carried into Life and made known abroad. There were days and months and years ahead in which the voice of the angel: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord," was to be transformed into the voice of the Child of the manger grown into manhood: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." As soon as we know that, there can be no doubt about life's highest privilege in the days after Christmas.

The present world is not a good world. Men are beginning to see that. Perhaps that is God's open door for a new generation of shepherds who will bring Christmas to the hearts of men. It is just the wistful restlessness of the modern soul, so fearfully lost in its own way, which makes a return to the divine meaning of Christmas the most crying need of our dark time. Men may not be able to put it into words, but they know it in their hearts as they know nothing else. By the bitter logic of time and circumstance they have learned that no law, no diplomacy, and no device invented by the wit of man can free them from the law of the jungle, heal their hurt lives, and bring them into harmony once more with the melodies of God's own eternal Christmas. There must be a voice, old and yet ever new, the voice of the angel speaking through our lips, over nineteen centuries of bitter hate and fearful malice, across the mist and tears of time: "Unto you is born a Savior." This is the abundant life which men seek with such passionate quest today, the life which rests in the Christmas of God. This is the life that moves like an army overriding the pain and death of all other days and months. The length of our days after Christmas means nothing. Only their depth counts—the radiance of our faith in Christmas, the richness of our love for the Child in the manger, the strength of our fellowship with Him who has redeemed us from the final tragedy of Christmas without the Cross.

Christmas in the year of our Lord 1958! The inn at Bethlehem has become the inns of the world in which there is still not room. The faithless years have only added to the crowd. And yet—perhaps there has seldom come a time in the story of man when the hammers of God have prepared men more fully for the story of the shepherds. Few generations have sought life and its last meaning with more earnestness. They have found small broken fragments of it in the laboratory. They have tasted its ashes in the wine of pleasure. They have seen its shell in the conquest of Nature. But for many of our generation, the last great adventure yet remains—the journey to Bethlehem. The manger is still the last resting place of the soul. Let Christmas come to this generation, today and tomorrow, and the Child in the manger will become the Everlasting Arms, the Great Companion, and the Mighty Savior. This we can make known abroad in the days after Christmas, as God gives time and life and breath, asking men, by the power and pity of God, to celebrate Christmas as a pledge and prophecy of a heavenly and eternal Christmas beyond the flaming ramparts of our world. And we, who by the power of the Spirit of the living God have come to Bethlehem in faith? Heavenly Child, make us shepherds again!

—Reprinted, with permission, from *Christmas,* an annual Publication of the Augsburg Publishing House

Maine Church a Work of Art

• The South Solon (Me.) Free Meeting House was built by a group of farmers in 1842. Located on the present route 43, just a few miles off U.S. Highway 201, near the town of Skowhegan, its original cost was $1,150. Nominally Congregational, the church was used by other Protestant denominations.

Norman Kent writes about the restoration and decoration of this church in the May 1958 issue of *American Artist.* About twenty years ago some newcomers to the community "decided to repair the old Meeting House." Then in 1951, under a grant by a trustee of the Art Institute of Chicago, it was decided to have the walls and ceiling "frescoed" by young artists and advanced students. Open competitions were held.

"In spite of the freedom allowed each designer and painter and the variation in style that can be detected by a study of individual panels, the over-all effect of the whole interior on a visitor is one of color harmony. This is due in part to the nature of fresco which, on drying, becomes an integral part of the wall . . . Then, too, once the central (west) wall was completed in 1952, subsequent painters working in the next four years were able to key their color generally to this first panel. . . . Because its interior has been transformed by its new frescoes into a glowing testament to the Creator, this little Meeting House may be destined to become a place of special pilgrimage."

U.S. Churches Send More Money to Brazil

• An additional $5,000 to aid famine victims in northwestern Brazil has been forwarded by Church World Service to aid relief centers in drought-afflicted areas. This brings relief funds contributed by Protestant churches in the U.S.A. up to $20,000.

Funds from the churches are being used to maintain relief centers supplying food, medical treatment and other assistance through the famine areas and in the organization of programs to clear the arid lands for replanting.

More than two million persons in the famine area are reported as existing at near-starvation levels, with little hope of natural relief expected before the seasonal rains due next spring.

The complete lack of rain this year, killing all crops and drastically reducing water supply, precipitated the famine which is termed the worst in the country's history.

Town & Country Church

Published monthly (except June, July, August) by the Department of Town and Country Church, Division of Home Missions, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

20c a copy; $1.50 a Year

Publication Office: Tenth and Scull Streets, Lebanon, Pa.

Editorial Office: 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at Lebanon, Pa., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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Contributors of articles to TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH speak for themselves and not for the National Council of Churches or sponsoring organizations.

Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

The Contribution of the Church to the Total Community

A Sociologist's Attempt to Rationalize the Mission of the Church

ROY C. BUCK

• What is the church's contribution to the total community? If the subject were broadly defined, it would lead into almost every aspect of American community life. The core of American culture is largely composed of the Judeo-Christian ethic and the ideology of freedom. From the core "normative channels" extend to almost every aspect of community life. Thus, the entire social structure receives, in some degree, pressures to conform to these core values.

On the other hand, the subject, narrowly defined, permits one to look at the church as the specialized means through which God comes into spiritual and intellectual relationship with man.

For the sociologist, the first approach has interesting theoretical possibilities. It permits him to conceptualize the church as an agent of social reform. It suggests a whole gamut of academic problems concerning social process and altering human behavior. These are all classic areas of sociological investigation.

In the second instance the church is perceived as an institution primarily dedicated to bringing God into relationship with man's intellectual and spiritual life. The social processes are important only by implication. For the sociologist, this latter approach is interesting to the extent that the church is successful in bringing God to man. Human behavior among men of God can then be studied in comparison to that of men who have not experienced this relationship. Also the opportunity would be present to study human relations between men of God and those who do not possess this characteristic.

It needs to be made clear that these frames of reference are different only in where the emphasis is placed. In the first instance, social reform is explicitly a part of the church program. In the latter, it is assumed that if the God-man relationship develops, social reform is a natural outcome by definition.

The Sociologist's Role

Rural church pastors, denominational leaders and rural sociologists have been working together for several decades on social problems directly related to the church. Rural sociologists have generally functioned in the roles of consultant and fact finder. The relationship has been such that the church has been free to assimilate the sociological contributions into its ongoing program in whatever way it sees as most useful.

The relationship outlined above has helped the church to secure its position in the social fabric of the community and to increase its impact on the life of man. It has provided the sociologist abundant opportunity to test hypotheses and add to his store of knowledge. It would seem that the relationship has been mutually profitable.

In any organization the concreteness of a goal opens the door to practical expediency which may deviate from the principles or beliefs upon which the organization is built. The church must be especially sensitive on this point because it has to exist and grow in a secular so-

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ciety; and yet somehow remain true to its sacred tradition. Church goals need the rigorous intellectual scrutiny required of the scientific methodology being employed to foster them. In a more general sense, research designed to foster certain goal attainments can never be a purely academic matter. It is a value laden enterprise. Scientists and those who seek their aid must face this fact as responsible citizens. They must assess, not only the manifest consequences of deliberately programmed action but also be mindful of the possibility of latent outcomes not anticipated. The latter may not always be negative but there is an element of chance involved which justifies more than passing concern.

A Point of Danger

Geneva under the rule of John Calvin is an extreme example of what can happen when the church is in a position of power. Theocracy is an organization of acts in the name of God. Such political and social philosophy can know no law, can know no morality. The means are always justified by the definition.

Casual observation and a little direct experience would lead us to conclude that some churches use this formula promiscuously in rallying and badgering parishioners to action. This emphasis will very likely put a church in a leadership position in a community. It permits anything to happen so long as it is blessed or is under the rubric of being done in the name of God.

The problem here is obvious. The goal needs to be coupled to the behavior designed to attain it. The behavior, in turn must be traced to the value system which formulated it. The three elements taken together compose the act. Belief and practice become as one in the act.

The Mission of the Church

If we accept the proposition that man's actions must be somehow of God, then the mission of the church becomes clear. Man must be helped to understand as well as worship God. Salvation must be sought on intellectual as well as spiritual grounds. The mystery of God must be made intellectually approachable to the man on the street as well as the man in the pulpit.

Church leaders have skirted this point too long. Church has been too much a place for rest and emotional release, a place to pay homage to an enigma, a place where trivial pleasantry is fostered. Many churches, I feel, have a policy of managing a congregation by regulating religious ignorance—sometimes fostering it and at other times ignoring it, but seldom deliberately programming to reduce it. Which climate is more conducive to making early a little colony of heaven: one of awe and fear or one of understanding and love? Ministers and church leaders need to share with parishioners their intellectual insights in a little more challenging way than is frequently the current practice.

God as Measure

The Sermon on the Mount is often used to validate energy the church and church-related interests expend in programs of social betterment and reform. This is a gross misinterpretation of what Jesus was talking about. He was at this early stage of his ministry setting forth the thesis of God's eternal love and gift of grace to those who act and love through him. The sermon lends no support to earthly acts, no matter how beneficial they may be, if the spirit of God is not at all times present.

That the church does good cannot be denied. But this cannot be counted on as collateral for grace. Grace will be experienced by those who work and love through God and not for God.

The measure of the worth of earthly acts is not in terms of worldly sacrifice and honor. God must be the measure.

Is there any comfort here for man? Yes, God's love, God's search is everlasting, repetitious, unvarying, and unselective. God never neglects, never rests, never weakens. The church must help man to understand not only the intensity and devotion of this divine labor, but also its pitiful loneliness, and its unfathomable emptiness. Christ's suffering on the cross is man's most valid measure of how God feels. The comfort is in knowing that as Christ forgave so God forgives. In this selfless incident is the great tragedy of humanity and the great triumph of God.

The Church as a Relationship with God

How to keep church action God-centered and not God-directed is no simple problem. It is easy to theorize. It is not difficult to design the model as we have attempted. But how to make it work? Or even—more to the point—how to help people want to make it work?

The sociologists working with religious leaders have not fully faced the theoretical and practical difficulties of fusing a nonmaterial ideology, which does not recognize worldly success norms with human association. Ordinarily, returns or the goals of social action are the reference for the sociological design of human behavior. "What is your goal?" is the first item; "What have you got to work with?" is the second. The strategy then is to direct the resources toward the objective. The sociologist's contribution is to increase the efficiency of the operation.

The church need not call a halt to its good works. The problem is one of expanding the program to include, in a little more deliberate fashion, its fundamental reason for being. As the critics of education are prone to say: "There needs to be a greater emphasis on subject matter and less attention to the frills." This conveys in a very general way how we feel toward the role of the church in the community.

The sociologists can be of little help on the basic issue. This is the concern of the church as an intellectual and spiritual center for man. The sociologist can say very little about the oughtness of man's acts. This is beyond his role as a sociologist. However, he may be insistent on knowing whether the intellectual and spiritual climate in which he is asked to make his observations is of such type that acts of God are possible.

Finally, we return to the theme of these comments. God in man is the primal concern. The church must reaffirm itself in bringing this transforming relationship to pass.

Church leaders in their search for help from the human relations sciences need to be ever mindful that the principles of human association work fundamentally the same regardless of the goal or the motivation. Perhaps this bit of knowledge in itself is sufficient to reaffirm the position that the essential contribution of the church is to work diligently toward fulfilling the biblical text: *I am the beginning and the end.*

The Gate of Heaven

(*Gen.* 28:10-17)

This is the Gate of Heaven:
The moment we pause to hear
The cry of a wounded brother,
And bend to bring him cheer.

This is the Gate of Heaven—
The Key to the Kingdom of Peace:
That men shall see God in each other;
Shall work for their neighbor's increase.

This is the Gate of Heaven:
This day, this time, this place,
This moment of devotion.
The prayer which we now place
With Thee, O Heavenly Father,
That we may always be
Led by thy hand,
Throughout our lives,
Drawn closer yet to Thee.

—Leslie T. Wells, from
A Further Harvest

Our Hearts Are Open Wide

Our hearts tonight are open wide;
The grudge, the grief are laid aside;
The path and porch are swept of snow,
The doors unlatched; the hearthstone glow;
No visitor can be denied.
All tender human homes must hide
Some wistfulness beneath their pride;
Compassionate and humble grow
Our hearts tonight.

Let empty chair and cup abide.
Who knows? Some well-remembered stride
May come as once so long ago;
Then welcome, be it friend or foe.
There is no anger can divide
Our hearts tonight.

—Christopher Morley

Notes on Recollections

XII. Persons and Places

BENSON Y. LANDIS

• In this piece I simply adopt a suggestion once made by my friend, Raymond W. Miller, who insisted that I should tell how I met some of my friends. I found I also had to put in a note about how I met him.

Edmund de S. Brunner and I met on a baseball field in Coopersburg, Pa., in 1911 or 1912. He was the first minister for miles around willing to play baseball with boys in the village. The Moravian Church's leaders in the town were not all happy about it. We then played together on the town team, and through him I got a college education, as I have recorded earlier in these notes, and was introduced to new worlds of knowledge and experience.

Robert Frost I first saw in an auditorium in the New School in New York, in 1931. Later I was to talk with him several times in Vermont, at South Shaftesbury, and at Fletcher Farm. I began assembling his books of poems and studying them from time to time. I have also read eagerly what others have written about Mr. Frost. As an amateur who appreciated poetry, I was able early to identify Robert Frost not as a regional or a nature poet, but as a man of wisdom who deals with the most profound philosophical issues. His terminology is rural, but he expresses universal interests in his writing. He insists that poetry is more often of the country than of the city.

Henry A. Wallace I met in the office of *Wallaces' Farmer* in Des Moines, about 1924. Then about 1926 the Department of Research and Education, of the Federal Council of Churches, asked him to come East to speak on agriculture at a dinner at the Aldine Club. Edwin R. A. Seligman spoke on the war debts of World War I. I was attracted to the editorials in *Wallaces Farmer*, many of which I later learned were written by Henry A., of the famous family. When Mr. Wallace became Secretary of Agriculture I had a special interest in the Department, and assisted some of his associates in setting up a project to encourage public discussion. Mr. Wallace is now one of the most versatile of Americans, a writer of power, a man with one of the finest of minds, a scientist who is sensitive to the artistic and spiritual interests of men.

Marian Neprud I met in a cafeteria line at Chapel Hill, N.C., during an adult education conference, about 1928. People were joking about the menu and then I met a person who has been instrumental in keeping me interested in public housing programs. Miss Neprud came from Coon Valley, Wisconsin, a community of Norwegian farmers, to work in the Y.W.C.A., and the League of Women Voters before she entered government service.

George W. Russell (AE) I met at a lecture in New York in 1930. Later he spoke at the American Country Life Association at Madison, Wisconsin, which was the largest annual meeting the Association ever had. During my conversations and contacts I found him the most fascinating Irishman I ever knew. He was poet and painter, editor and pamphleteer, mystic and dreamer, an organizer of farmers' cooperatives who was acquainted with dairy barns. Mr. Russell was selected by Sir Horace Plunkett to be one of his associates in the Irish Agricultural Organization Society. Both were Protestants, but they succeeded in organizing Catholic farmers. Both lived lives of public service. Without formal religious affiliation, AE wrote much about religion, and was once described by a Roman Catholic as the most religious man the speaker had ever met. AE again came to America for a brief

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Photo by A. Devaney, N. Y.

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visit to the Department of Agriculture in 1935.

Mabel Carney, advocate of rural education, I first saw at Teachers College, Columbia University, when I registered there to take courses in the fall of 1922. Later I noted her devotion in action during the annual meeting of the American Country Life Association in the same year. For a long while Professor Carney served as treasurer of the A.C.L.A., when I was executive secretary. Miss Carney followed eagerly all developments in rural education, and especially the interests of her students, while at the college and later.

Warren H. Wilson, dean of the church and country life movement workers, I met at the annual meeting of the Home Missions Council held in New York, January, 1919. Wilson had then served almost a decade. He was devoted to the cause, an able speaker "who always rang the bell." He sometimes overstated for emphasis. He knew what country churches were like and how they functioned. When I came to the Federal Council in October, 1923, I sought his advice. What I remember most distinctly was a remark: "Do not spend much of your time running around making speeches." Wilson knew how to encourage young men.

E. R. Bowen of Peoria, Ill., was a marked man when he walked into my office in 1934, offering to pay me for three hours of my time. He was the first man who had ever offered to pay me for any time at all. My response was, I recollect, that he could not pay me, and I didn't have three hours. But we started, at about 3:00 P.M., and when I looked at my watch it was 6:00 P.M. He had his three hours, and I had unfolded before me his own search for a vocation and authentic values. He was a business man. He was interested in becoming executive secretary of the Cooperative League. Later he was kind enough to say I had helped him. He surely helped me then, and many times later. He also persuaded me to do some of the later writing I did on cooperatives. He had seen some of my earlier pieces.

Sometime after Mark A. Dawber left the rural Methodist pastorate in Eastern Pennsylvania I met the man who was to inspire and lead me on many later occasions during our association. Dr. Dawber is truly in the prophetic tradition. When he came to the Methodist Board of Home Missions he was a genuine cooperator. He was in the habit of outlining sermons, and thus he outlined one once a week even during his career as executive of the Home Missions Council. A good administrator, he found relaxation by wood carving, by playing the organ, and by composing music.

E. C. Lindeman, a man who meant much to me over many years, I saw first at the New York meeting in 1922 of the American Country Life Association. The sessions were held at Teachers College, Columbia University. Lindeman made several pleas for democratic discussion groups. Several others were skeptical. Lindeman had taught at the North Carolina State College for Women at Greensboro, and was doing some special research. Then he taught social philosophy at the New York School of Social Work until his retirement. After retirement he led an active life as lecturer until his death.

Raymond A. Miller I met because some fifteen years ago Msgr. Ligutti made one of his startling statements that attracted the interest of public relations people. Ray wanted to learn what church people were saying about agriculture. He called on his friend, Dr. William Gilroy, then editor of the Congregationalist *Advance* in Boston. Dr. Gilroy sent him to Thomas Alfred Tripp, director of town and country church work for the Congregationalists, who in turn sent him to me. I gave him my compilations of church statements on social ideals for agriculture, and thus began one of my fruitful friendships. For Dr. Miller brings together more people who should be brought together than anyone else in the U.S.A., and most of them would not meet if he did not become the catalyst.

A Winter Prayer

O Thou, whose gentle snowy blanket dost shade the earth, we thank thee for thy presence in times of rest. Restore our spirits; make our hearts receptive for thy word as the land for the seed.

In field and home, in church and barn, may we respond to thee.

In work and rest and worship, grant us an increase of thy spirit. In our Saviour's name, we ask it. *Amen.* —HUGH OUTTERSON

"Work Week" for Missouri Church

JOSEPH T. TODD

• Ten Christian young people from Disciples of Christ churches over the state of Missouri and five young persons from the First Christian Church of Edina, Missouri, participated in a "Work Week," July 14-20, 1958 at the Edina church. This "Work Week" was the first of its kind. If an evaluation of this project shows that it was successful a similar project will be held in other Missouri town and country churches each year.

The "Work Week" project, sponsored by the Edina Christian Church under the direction of the Rev. Jack Bodard, director of Town and Country Church work in the state of Missouri, accomplished a great deal of work despite rain during that week.

The walls and woodwork inside the church were painted, the floors were sanded and given three coats of varnish. New concrete was poured in front of the church and a new walk was laid leading to the basement from the front of the church. New gravel was spread over the parking area and a new fence of steel cable was built and painted, separating the parking area from the church lawn. Trees were trimmed and the yard was raked and mowed. The busy schedule did not interfere with the morning and evening devotions, which were given by the young people each day. Lunch was served each noon by the women of the church in the church basement.

Recreation for the young people was swimming and a wiener roast. On Thursday evening the youth group of the Edina church was introduced to the visiting young people. Later, the visitors told of young people's work in their home churches.

On Sunday morning worship was held in the Edina public school auditorium—due to the fact that the floors had been recently varnished in the church. The young people had charge of the service, and the Rev. Joseph Todd spoke on the topic, "They Came to Bear Witness."

A Dedication Service, in recognition of the work of the young people, was held Sunday afternoon.

It is believed that this "Work Week" project was very successful. In the years to come Missouri should have several such work camps in their town and country churches each year.

The Tax "Bite"

• In 1885, U. S. taxes averaged only $1.98 per person! But, in 1958, Americans will pay more for government than they will spend on food, clothing, medical care and religious activities combined. Taxes are now the biggest, single item in the cost of living!

Rural Cooperation

DANIEL SCHORES

• Many are the small towns which lie half dead . . . deserted buildings on Main Street, vacant farms in the surrounding neighborhood, unemployed citizens, unkept stores and abandoned civic organizations . . . dead because of the lack of cooperation. Many are the towns which have lost population simply because of a general unwillingness to work for each other's betterment. There are those communities where new school buildings are sorely needed but bond issues have been consistently voted down . . . and some citizens were unwilling to sacrifice for the sake of their future.

Cooperation, if it is to accomplish anything worthwhile, will cost us something. History proves it.

Let us take a quick trip back nearly 2500 years. We shall visit the ruined city of Jerusalem. The first of those who have been in the Babylonian exile have returned. During their seventy-year absence the city has been ravaged by surrounding tribes. Many neighbors prefer that Jerusalem never rebuild itself . . . the leaders of this group are Sanballet and Tobiah.

The returning Jews are discouraged, without leadership and lacking coordination of their efforts. They have conceded defeat and resigned themselves to the fate that appears so likely. Any with talent or initative are busy building dishonest businesses or taking advantage of the poor.

But God has a way of taking over where man's faith in himself has failed. In far-off Susa, Nehemiah hears the call of God to return to Jerusalem and lead his people in the rebuilding of the holy city. Primary among their needs were stout walls for protection against desert raiders and neighboring thieving tribes. Securing permission from the king, Artaxerxes, Nehemiah headed home.

After inspecting the broken walls and the burned gates, he gathers the people and gives what we would call a "pep talk." With renewed enthusiasm they shout: "Let us rise up and build." Portions of wall to be constructed are assigned to each tribe and each guild of craftsmen.

Trouble has not ended, however. Enemies of the Jews constantly annoy them, try to divert their attention from the rebuilding and threaten future troubles. Worse than this opposition is the fact that some of their own people are attempting to make gain unworthily. While most men worked on the walls they were forced to neglect their fields and so fell behind in taxes. Money had to be borrowed at high interest rates from fellow Jews. Nehemiah's greatest single contribution appears to be when he convinced these money-lenders to forfeit the interest on these loans. He appealed to their patriotism, religious loyalty and personal security. But whenever you attempt to persuade men to cooperate with one another at a financial cost to themselves it takes divine effort.

Yet this is exactly what is needed in many of our open country and small town communities. We must learn to work together, to cooperate, in spite of sacrifice. There is a dire need for a true spirit of cooperation if we are to better living conditions for all. We cannot close our eyes to families in need. We cannot have a well-kept, progressive community until all are willing to shoulder their share of the responsibility. And of him "to whom much has been given, much shall be required."

Cooperation is a lesson easily learned from rural life. Christian farmers learn naturally partnership with God. No man goes his way alone. Families built the American frontier . . . husking bees, house-raising parties, land clearing days for the new family. Even now we see one farmer trading the use of a binder for the opportunity to borrow the other's corn-picker. Families work as units. Marketing and purchasing cooperatives are a normal thing in rural areas. Neighbors exchange work.

What is needed on the farm and in town is to make the best possible use of these opportunities for cooperation. The family farm is still an American ideal. Social values are strengthened when families learn to work together. Community organizations which can be family-centered . . . like the PTA, church, farm club . . . should be given more support and loyalty.

There must be cooperation between the home and other character-building institutions, such as the school and church. Too often parents are unaware of the purposes of these agencies. Through the PTA the school has a chance to explain its program, but only to those who are present. Through active participation in the church parents can aid in the character development of their children.

Churches in rural areas must work together. Bitter competition and jealousy have no place in any Christian group. They can be self-destructive in a small rural neighborhood. Sect-group pastors and churches need to be invited to share in union programs and ministerial associations. A united front on social concerns can produce results of which all can be proud.

Community organizations must learn to budget their time demands on their members in rural areas. Usually it is the same group of persons who participate in several organizations. The use of a community-wide calendar is an excellent means of avoiding conflicts. In a small town there should not be two civic or fraternal groups striving to accomplish the same objectives. This is a waste of time and talent.

Industrial development boards through the general cooperation of the citizens of a community can do much to improve employment and living standards.

Rural and town areas should cooperate on joint marketing. Farm machinery pools, cooperative buying organizations, credit unions and other formal means of working together have proved successful. Consolidation of schools and the merg-

ıg of several smaller organizations ıto one effective group may be of ılue. The sharing of special abili- es is wise. Often it is necessary for ·veral communities to work with ne another in securing an industry 'hich may help their common areas. Iedical or service facilities by their ature require larger population roups to serve and can be best stablished through cooperation.

Finally, cooperation involves stew- rdship of the land, the recognition f God's laws and the building of igher standards of personal integ- ity. In any field more can be ac- omplished if everyone will work or the good of all. Nehemiah can each us a lesson in cooperation.

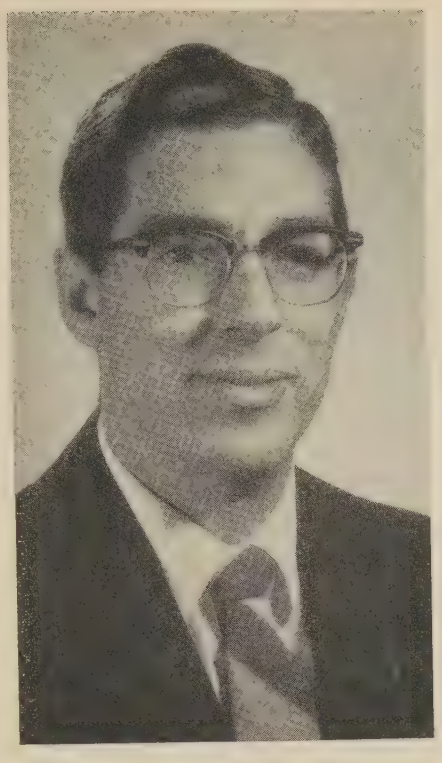
;299,000,000 for Overseas Relief

• In 1957 the various Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish agen- ies gave about $299,000,000 in cash ınd "in kind" for overseas relief and ehabilitation, according to a com- ıilation made by Helen Buckler for he National Council of Churches' *Outlook,* and published in that peri- ıdical, June, 1958. The figure in- ludes reports from only 17 of the argest Protestant bodies, but does ıot include sums handled by the foreign mission boards, a large por- tion of which goes for education, social welfare, health, and technical aid. More than half of the $299,000,- ıoo was in the form of food and goods in kind. The Roman Catholic total was about $125,000,000, the Jewish $102,000,000, and $77,000,000 for official Protestant agencies and others with mainly Protestant con- stituencies.

I came to Christ as a country boy. I did not understand all about the plan of salvation. One does not have to understand it, he has only to stand upon it. I do not understand all about electricity but I do not intend sitting around in the dark until I do!

VANCE HAVNER in *Repent or Else!* (Fleming H. Revell Company.)

Daniel M. Schores



• The Rev. Daniel Schores, Methodist minister and pastor of the Cabool Larger Parish in Missouri, has been appointed Area Rural Director for the state of Missouri for his denomination.

In this position Mr. Schores will coordinate all special rural church work in the state of Missouri, will work with conference leadership in promoting better rural programs, supervise sixteen district rural secretaries, handle correspondence and represent town and country Methodism at state and national meetings.

Nuggets

Character is at once an effect and a cause—an effect of yesterday, a cause of tomorrow.

Men's lives, like rivers, become crooked from following the paths of least resistance.

—*Anonymous*

Was hilft laufen, wenn man nicht auf dem rechten Weg ist?

—A German Proverb

(What is the use of running, if you are not on the right road?)

His "Circuit" Is the Radio in South Dakota

• Since the first of the year, a modern Methodist "circuit rider" in South Dakota has been taking the Christian message each week to thousands of farm and ranch families in isolated sections of South Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming.

Though following in the tradition of the pioneer circuit riders, the Rev. Mark Walker of Belle Fourche, S.D., conducts his ministry to the sparsely settled areas by radio and by mail. The new project is called "The Circuit Rider."

Twice each week Mr. Walker, a thirty-year veteran of the ministry in South Dakota, broadcasts over radio station KDSJ in Deadwood. At the request of listeners, he mails out church school lessons and literature which can be used for home study.

Many of Mr. Walker's listeners in western South Dakota, eastern Montana and Wyoming live great distances from any church. Often roads, bad weather, or other conditions keep children and parents from attending Sunday school or church.

To catch the many early risers in his radio audience, Mr. Walker speaks at 6:30 a.m. each Wednesday. He gives a devotional message and guidance in the use of the church school lessons. On Saturday at 9 a.m. his program is for children. He describes the lesson materials, tells stories, and helps to give the children a feeling of belonging to the church and of studying about their faith.

"The Circuit Rider" is a combined project of the South Dakota Annual Conference and the Methodist Boards of Missions and Education. The Conference contributes $1,000 annually, and the Board of Missions gives $2,500 through its Department of Town and Country Work (of the Division of National Missions). The Board of Education in cooperation with the Methodist Publishing House furnishes the lessons and literature, including the magazine, "The Christian Home," free.

—From *Methodist Rural Fellowship Bulletin*

The Yearbook of American Churches

• The reports received from religious bodies on their officers, statistics, and related information are the main subject matter in the *Yearbook of American Churches,* published annually by the Office of Publication and Distribution of the National Council of Churches. The current issue is the 27th volume. It is entitled *Yearbook of American Churches for 1959* and was published September, 1958. It contains data on all faiths.

There are nine directories, the largest being one of 112 pages on Religious Bodies in the United States. This contains the names of officers and staff members of the numerous bodies, and their addresses. State and local councils with both paid leadership and voluntary leadership are listed, including the committee chairmen of the councils with salaried officers. There are directories of religious bodies in Canada, of theological seminaries, of accredited colleges with and without religious affiliations, of religious periodicals, of ecumenical agencies, and of national, interdenominational church agencies, as well as one embracing informal or undenominational religious fellowships and social and civic organizations.

The statistical and historical section contains five parts. The largest lists the official reports received with the latest information from 255 religious bodies, for Continental United States on their membership, religious education, and number of clergy. Financial data from 52 Protestant and Orthodox bodies in the U.S.A., and six bodies in Canada, as compiled by the National Council's Department of Stewardship and Benevolence, are reprinted in large part.

About 190 bodies are arranged in 22 groups or families; the largest of these is the Baptist group with 27 denominations, 89,485 churches and 19,766,121 members.

While a number of denominations do not report annually and thus have figures only for earlier years, it is believed that most of the latest reports are for the calendar year 1957 or for a fiscal year ending in 1957.

By major groups the latest information on membership is as follows:

Buddhist	10,000
Old Catholic, Polish National Catholic, and Armenian Church of North America	468,978
Eastern Orthodox	2,540,446
Jewish Congregations	5,500,000
Roman Catholic	35,846,477
Protestant	59,823,777

The total figure for membership from 255 bodies reporting out of 267 listed is 104,189,678 persons, compared with 103,224,954 in the previous book, received from 258 bodies out of 268 listed. The gain in the gross figures was nine-tenths of one per cent. The rate of gain in population was 1.8 per cent.

The total number of Protestants reporting this year, noted above, included a small body not reporting a year earlier. Last year the total number of Protestants reported was 60,148,980, including one large body from which no report was obtained this year.

Two hundred and twenty-six Protestant bodies reported for both years. These bodies reported 59,808,707 persons this year and 58,567,694 a year earlier, a gain of 1,241,083 persons, or 2.1 per cent.

The Roman Catholic Church reported 34,563,851 members a year ago and 35,846,477 this year, a gain of 1,282,626 persons, or 3.7 per cent.

The Roman Catholics include all baptized persons as members, including infants. The Jewish congregations regard as members all Jews in communities having congregations. Most of the Eastern Churches include all persons of all ages in the cultural or nationality group being served. Most Protestant bodies count only persons who have attained full membership, and all but a small proportion of these are over 13 years of age. The Lutheran bodies, the Protestant Episcopal Church, and a few smaller bodies report as members all baptized persons including infants.

Two hundred and thirty bodies reported total enrollment in Sunday or Sabbath schools. The latest compilation gives a total of 40,359,772 persons. There are 269,331 schools reported with 3,232,040 officers and teachers. The Protestant churches, which have generally emphasized the Sunday schools, reported 37,208,701 enrollment, or 92.2 per cent of the total for all faiths.

Only 226 bodies can give figures on their clergy having charges. This year there are 228,281 pastors having charges and 355,853 clergy in all on their rolls. The latter figure includes clergymen in other religious vocations than in the local churches, and in some instances retired persons.

BOOK REVIEWS

Gift From the Hills. By Lucy Morgan and LeGette Blythe. The Bobbs-Merrill Company, New York. 1958. $5.00.

On a North Carolina hilltop stands the Penland School of Handicrafts, its rugged buildings full of students and teachers, especially of weaving, for which the school is known around the world. This year Penland is celebrating its thirty-five years of existence and, in *Gift From the Hills,* Miss Lucy Morgan, the director, relates its history to LeGette Blythe.

It was in 1923 that Penland Weavers was established "in an effort to revive and perpetuate the native crafts of the community and to provide for the people an opportunity of supplementing the products of their small farms with a little cash income." From this beginning Penland has grown until it now has a physical plant which is valued at more than $200,000. "Miss Lucy" tells about the early financial difficulties, the cooperative building of the weaving cabin, the formation of the Southern Highlands Handicraft Guild and the construction of the Craft House with heart-warming informality.

A study trip to Scandinavia is described in detail and the need is noted for the international exchange of creative ideas. Penland has had

udents from every state in the nion as well as from about fifty reign countries. One student from rdan said of her experience there: Here we are doing things together nd we have learned that Americans re very much like all the rest of us . . the world can be joined in some rm when the various peoples real- know each other."

—R.B.R.

wenty-One and Sixty-Five. By Paul Scott Mowrer. The Wings Press, Mill Valley, California. 1958. $2.75.

This is the sixth book of verse by Ir. Mowrer, a versatile man who ad a distinguished career in jour- alism and now lives in rural New Iampshire. He is a poet who speaks learly and directly out of his own oncerns.

He celebrates much of his rural xperience in some of these poems. thers are plainly written out of his ong contact with France, particu- arly Paris. Because he writes direct- out of his heart he succeeds in nding a response in his readers.

There is a long dialogue between wo men, one old, one young, in a mall country house, entitled "Twen- y-One and Sixty-Five." There are ections under the headings: "Read- ngs in Genesis," "In the Cool of the Vood," "Two Hunting Pieces," and thers that relate to France.

Eight poems are arranged under In the Cool of the Wood," one with his title. One poem begins, "Are not rue joys free-found, like wind and un?" "In the Cool of the Wood" he poet dwells on his own "un- chievement." In "October Mood" ccur these lines:

> Let me but wait, resigned.
> Let me but empty my mind.

In "A Winter's Day in New Iampshire" the poet puts many per- eptive observations, including this f the silence: "Deafness itself could ot be more profound."

The poem "The Soul" concludes:

> It is the essence of our inmost selves.
> A flame immortal lit from God's own fire.

—Benson Y. Landis

A Minute of Prayer

• A concept so simple, so fundamental, that it might never have been captured and set to work serving humanity, underlies the unique new series of films for television, *Minutes of Prayer.* This concept provides a means of carrying over the attitudes and the actual practice of prayer, from church, synagogue or Sunday school, into the daily activities of families and individuals.

Be it said to the credit of America's great motion picture industry that one of its leaders sensed the need, provided the means of meeting it, and used the medium of television to achieve his goal.

Minutes of Prayer, a series of 365 individual 60-second prayers filmed in beautiful color, is designed for the community-service programming of television stations. It provides a prayer for every day of the year, for general worship as well as for the various religious festivals and special observances of the three great faiths. Each *Minute of Prayer* shows people in their daily lives—at home, on the job, at worship—against the background of a simple, reverently-spoken prayer—not a sermon.

The series is a true "first" in television programming. It affords for the first time a full library of brief inspirational messages in beautiful color, suitable for use at any hour of the program day, appealing to all segments of the station's audience, and available at the decision and choice of the program director. In other words, it permits the station to support all elements in community leadership without depending upon any of them for "spot" program material.

Lewis Kerner, the motion picture executive who produced the series, was inspired and encouraged by his wife in their common desire to provide television program material which emphasizes moral and ethical values. Proof of their success—in towns where television is bringing *Minutes of Prayer* into the home, public demand has led some stations to schedule the one-minute prayers as often as five times a day.

Many of the people who have seen the films or heard about them have asked what they can do to have the series shown in their own communities. The distributors, Television Industries, Inc., 445 Park Avenue, New York City, have developed a special plan to place the series within reach of all stations, large or small. Anyone who would like to have his own TV station make this contribution to the spiritual life of the community can just tell the station manager or program director about the series, and refer him to Television Industries, Inc., for details of the special plan.

New Voices in Old Worlds

• Christian witness in the Middle East is interpreted in a series of biographies by Paul Geren, in a book, *New Voices, Old Worlds* (New York, Friendship Press, 1958. Cloth, $2.95; paper, $1.50). Mr. Geren, executive vice-president of Baylor University, tells about persons whose experiences reflect the full range of the position of Christians in the part of the world where their faith originated.

The most famous person whose biography is herein written is Charles Malik, statesman of Lebanon, who was once a teacher of mathematics. Fifteen persons of power are met through the pages of the book.

Mr. Geren observes that "any story for this part of the world involves hunger, thirst, imprisonment, the plights of those who are sick and those who are strangers. This is a part of the world that gives a haven to refugees—and makes refugees of its own." Also: "The Middle East is holy ground for Jews, Muslims, and Christians. . . . It is very right that we should . . . go to the old world with an ear for new voices."

Many men build as cathedrals are built, the part nearest the ground finished; but that part which soars to heaven, the turrets and spires, forever incomplete.

—Henry Ward Beecher

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Book Reviews

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dvancing the Smaller Local Church, W. Curry Mavis (Alice Cobb)	Sept.	15
mas Jackman, Daniel Doan (Caroline B. Sherman)	May	15
elievers, Janice Hold Giles (Caroline B. Sherman)	May	15
eyond the Green Gate, Ralph W. Seager (Benson Y. Landis)	Sept.	15
lue Camellia, Frances Parkinson Keyes (Caroline B. Sherman)	May	15
lythe, Legette and Morgan, Lucy, Gift from the Hills (Ruth Robinson)	Dec.	12
Brunner, Edmund de S., The Growth of a Science (Benson Y. Landis)	Mar.	14
Byron, Gilbert, The Lord's Oysters (Caroline B. Sherman)	May	15
Carrington, W. L., Psychology, Religion and Human Need (William G. Jamison)	Apr.	15
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Community of the Future and the Future of the Community, Arthur E. Morgan (Richard O. Comfort)	Jan.	14
Deal, Borden, Dunbar's Cove (Caroline B. Sherman)	May	15
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Edge of Darkness, Mary Ellen Chase (Caroline B. Sherman)	May	15
Faith, Fun, and Fantasy, Leslie T. Wells (Ruth Robinson)	Jan.	15
Family Farming, Marshall Harris and Robert A. Rohwer (Dale W. Medearis)	Mar.	15
Fruit Tramp, Vinnie Williams (Caroline B. Sherman)	May	15
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Giles, Janice Hold, The Believers (Caroline B. Sherman)	May	15
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Harris, Marshall and Rohwer, Robert, Family Farming (Dale W. Medearis)	Mar.	15
Hill, Pati, The Nine Mile Circle (Caroline B. Sherman)	May	15
Judas the Betrayer, Albert Nicole (Ruth Robinson)	Mar.	15
Keyes, Frances Parkinson, Blue Camellia (Caroline B. Sherman)	May	15
Lady, Conrad Richter (Caroline B. Sherman)	May	15
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Morgan, Arthur E., Community of the Future and the Future of the Community (Richard O. Comfort)	Jan.	14
Morgan, Lucy and LeGette Blythe, Gift from the Hills (Ruth Robinson)	Dec.	12
Mowrer, Paul Scott, Twenty-One and Sixty-Five (Benson Y. Landis)	Dec.	13
Mrs. Daffodil, Gladys Tabor (Caroline B. Sherman)	May	15
Nicole, Albert, Judas the Betrayer (Ruth Robinson)	Mar.	15
Nine Mile Circle, Pati Hill (Caroline B. Sherman)	May	15
Psychology, Religion and Human Need, W. L. Carrington (William G. Jamison)	Apr.	15
Rich, Mark, The Rural Church Movement (Wesley A. Hotchkiss)	May	14
Richter, Conrad, The Lady (Caroline B. Sherman)	May	15
Rural Church Movement, Mark Rich (Wesley A. Hotchkiss)	May	14
Seager, Ralph W., Beyond the Green Gate (Benson Y. Landis)	Sept.	15
Sing Out the Glory, Gladys Hasty Carroll (Caroline B. Sherman)	May	15
Tabor, Gladys, Mrs. Daffodil (Caroline B. Sherman)	May	15
Twenty-One and Sixty-Five, Paul Scott Mowrer (Benson Y. Landis)	Dec.	13
Wells, Leslie T., Faith, Fun, and Fantasy (Ruth Robinson)	Jan.	15
Williams, Vinnie, The Fruit Tramp (Caroline B. Sherman)	May	15

"This Is the Migrant"

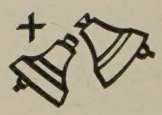
Born in a cornfield,
Raised like a slave,
Don't even have
The price of a grave.

• These are the words of a chant by migrant farm workers. The chant is a plaint with no author or tune. It is quoted by Louisa Shotwell in a booklet, *This Is the Migrant.* (New York, Friendship Press, 1958. 60 cents.)

"The little boy who told his teacher he was 'born in beans' was not making a joke; he was just echoing his family's way of marking the events in their lives."

"How many migrants are there?" This is a question that cannot be answered accurately. "The U. S. Office of Education lists 875 counties in which more than 100 migrants reside during peak harvest seasons." Farmers in thirty-one states employ migrants from Texas alone. In June, 1956, public employment offices made 1,338,545 placements in farm work.

Miss Shotwell of the National Council's Division of Home Missions interprets the subject briskly under the following aspects: "The Roots of Migrancy," "The People Who Migrate," "Life 'On the Season,'" "The Migrant Ministry," "The Migrant and His Government," "The Future of Migrancy."

The cooperative Protestant migrant ministry was begun in 1920 by church women with a concern and in response to a survey by the Interchurch World Movement. The national program is administered by the Division of Home Missions and there is excellent state and local cooperation. Many volunteers help mightily. There is a permanent staff of 40 persons. In 1956 there were in this impressive migrant ministry 328 seasonal professional workers, 4,648 trained volunteers who served 133,130 migrants in 31 states. The ministry includes adult education, recreation, and varied health and social services.

The human problems of disadvantaged people are carefully considered. The proposals for improving their situations are discussed. The farm experts say that it looks as if "there will be considerable migrancy for some time to come," because of the seasonal characteristics of agriculture. But migrancy is an unsatisfactory way of life, and there are those who think the migrant's good life will never come until society finds a way of abolishing migrancy and enables the wandering worker and his family to find a place elsewhere in the economy.